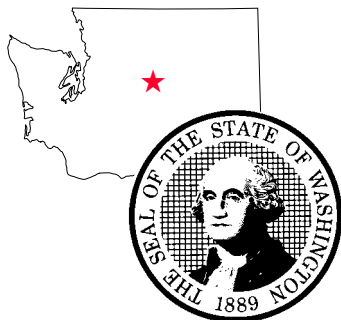




Representative
Cary
Condotta
R-Wenatchee



2003 Legislature Accomplishments

*A Report on Progress for the 12th District including
Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas and Grant Counties*

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2003 legislative session was long and arduous and took some tough compromising. But our overtime, in the form of two *special* sessions, was well worth it. **We completed the critical work necessary to improve the state's business climate and provide for the truly needy. We made progress for taxpayers, families in need of jobs and employers.**

At the end of the 2003 *regular* session, lawmakers adjourned with a \$360 million tax increase on the table. At that juncture, we had little to show for our push to create a better business climate in Washington, save jobs, balance the budget without new taxes, and restore land and water rights.

I knew we could not solve our economic problems with a more government-as-usual approach. That meant balancing the budget *without* raising taxes. Facing a projected \$2.6 billion shortfall, it would require some tough decisions. **When all was said and done, we finally put a stop to many years of state government growing faster than the rate of inflation and population.**

Using the Priorities of Government approach, we effectively prioritized key services and protected against further deterioration of the private sector. As we move forward, I'll emphasize refining that priority stack to ensure that critical programs are addressed and adequately funded, with existing state revenues. We will continue to improve our business climate to stabilize those revenues.

I hope you'll contact me with questions and concerns regarding legislative issues. I'll help in any way I can. Thanks for the opportunity to serve and represent you.

Sincerely,

Cary Condotta
State Representative

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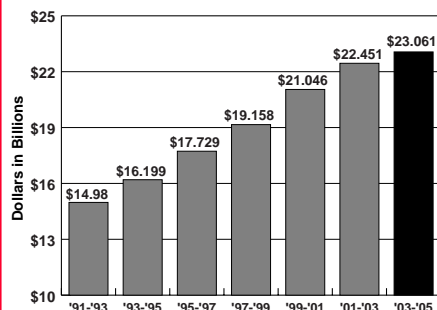
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Weekly

Contact Information

Responsible budget averts tax increase

State Operating Budget



The 2003-05 general-fund budget adopted this year by the Legislature is two percent greater than the 2001-03 general-fund budget.

With our state facing the worst economic recession in a generation, House and Senate Republicans felt it was imperative that the Legislature not place a greater burden on taxpayers. With a projected state budget deficit approaching \$3 billion, we insisted that government establish priorities and then make the tough choices to achieve those priorities while living within our means, just as families must do.

In the end, a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers prevailed and adopted a no-new-tax operating budget that focuses limited resources on our most pressing priorities and protects services for the truly needy. Here are some highlights:

- No new general fund taxes. Requires state government to live within its means.
- Teachers in their first seven years will get a pay increase. By the second year of the budget, beginning teachers would make more than \$30,000 a year.
- The budget includes \$30 million more for class-size reduction (I-728), boosting the per-pupil grant to \$245 in the second budget year.
- Colleges will be allowed to increase in-state undergraduate tuition by up to 7 percent in each of the next two academic years, down from 9 percent originally planned.
- State employees will be required to pay for 16 percent of the cost of their health insurance, a 2 percent increase but less than anticipated.
- The state-subsidized Basic Health Plan for the working poor will provide for 100,000 people, up from the governor's proposal of 60,000.
- Department of Health and Social Services (DSHS) has its largest budget ever, nearly \$16 billion over the next two years.
- Home-care workers will receive a pay increase in October.
- Funded parks and provided for county health departments.

Looked at another way, this budget increases spending by nearly a half a billion dollars. The cuts outlined here are from a "projected" budget. In actual dollars, there are more increases than cuts. In the final analysis, this operating budget is responsible, supports existing and new needs while putting a stop to unlimited growth in government.

Solutions for a better economy



We have high expectations for our quality of life in Washington: excellent schools, affordable health care, public safety we can count on and the protection of our open spaces and pristine natural environment. Without a healthy, diversified and robust state economy, our quality-of-life expectations become more difficult to achieve.

The 2003 session produced substantial reforms to improve our state's business climate and encourage employers to invest in and expand job opportunities in Washington.

Namely, we devised a fix for the state's costly unemployment insurance system. We also took the first steps towards reforming our state's workers' compensation system. Also important are new laws that change our state's water policy to provide more rights to citizens and local governments to manage their own resources.

The Legislature also passed tax incentives for new aerospace investments to entice Boeing's 7E7 assembly to Washington. I wanted to see progress on the business climate for all of Washington before we committed to Boeing. I'm pleased that, in the end, we managed to do both. More work must be done, however, to strengthen our economy and stimulate job growth. The accomplishments of this session are a good first step in making us more competitive with other states.

Representative Cary Condotta • 12th District

Education requires more

Although the final budget increased salaries for beginning teachers and funds part of I-728 (the class size initiative), we could have done better. During the session, a number of us in the House put together a plan for additional revenue for education. But, unfortunately, despite a positive response from fellow lawmakers we could not get House Democrat leadership to bring the legislation to the floor. We'll try again next session, though, and not to worry, there were no new general taxes or fees in this plan.

Local Capital Budget projects

The final capital budget we passed in the special session delivers several major investments for the 12th District. We gained funding for community projects in several cities, including the South Wenatchee Family Services Center, and money dedicated to saving the Twin Lakes aquifer near Winthrop.

Water "pollution" corrected



Another important legislative accomplishment for the 12th District and the people I represent include water rights reform legislation. In what has been the most significant water management reform in nearly 40 years, the Legislature passed several bills protecting water rights, providing for watershed planning, and ensuring that local communities, farmers and wildlife have adequate water resources.

In particular, Substitute Senate Bill 5028 (that passed during the special session and mirrors my prime-sponsored House Bill 1534) will clarify the state's authority to regulate water pollution.

I understand it's incredibly important to the people I serve to reclaim our water rights with local needs and policies in mind. Going into this session I knew we must change the definition of "pollution," as it's currently interpreted by the Department of Ecology.

This new water law does just that by correcting the misguided translation and defining pollution in the traditional sense, giving it back its real meaning. It now says that simply taking water out of a stream under a valid permit doesn't constitute pollution. This change does not, however, override any of the current and extensive protections for water quality. Other water laws passed this session help municipalities by offering greater flexibility to communities to respond to local water needs.

Transportation plan lacks efficiencies and reforms



The transportation plan that passed this session, and is already being funded by another nickel you're paying at the pump, lacks the efficiencies and reforms necessary to make a significant difference for our communities.

The transportation package raises \$4.2 billion over 10 years to invest in highway, rail, mobility, ferry and transit projects in Washington. What it *doesn't* do, however, is force optimal spending of new revenues with meaningful reforms such as real permit streamlining, true contracting out, performance audits and a common-sense prevailing wage. As a result, I didn't vote for these new taxes without the much-needed reforms to make sure taxpayers' money is spent efficiently.

Also, while the 12th District will see some improvements to local roads as a part of this plan, the fact is more than \$600 million goes to non-road projects and administrative costs at the expense of road construction. Washingtonians will pay additional sales taxes on licensed vehicles to fund this portion of the package. I find this split sales tax unacceptable and will continue to oppose such non-road taxes.

2003 Legislature Accomplishments

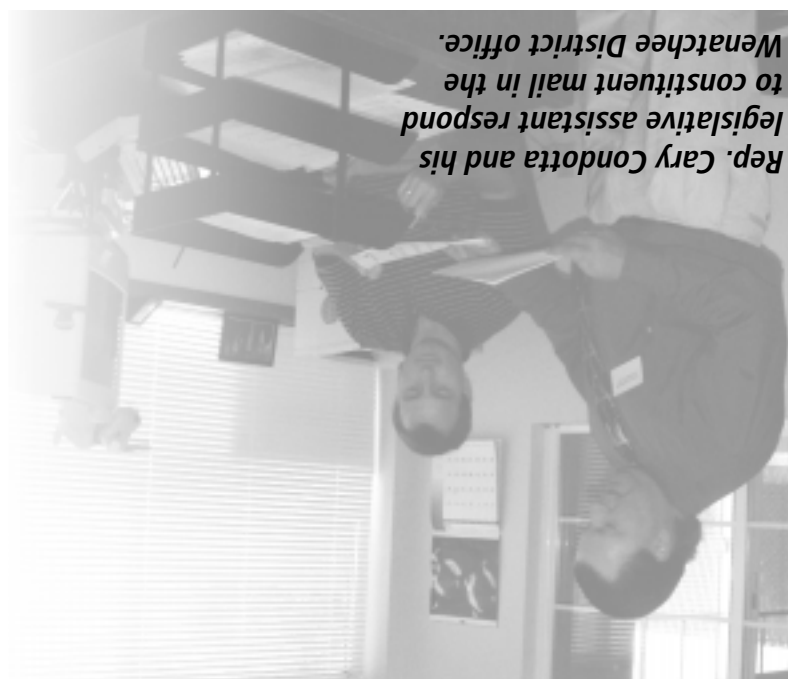
Representative **Cary Condotta** • **12th District**

**New District office
answers the call
close to home**

Now that our work is complete in Olympia for the 2003 legislative session, we've opened up our District office in Wenatchee. Please give us a call or come on by. Our address is: **3012 G.S. Center Road, Suite D**. Our local number is: **(509) 664-1274**. Kurt Hammond is my legislative assistant and will be at the District office to help with your questions and concerns. Our hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday. I plan to be out and about in the community participating in events and meetings. I encourage you to let my office know of any functions that are scheduled to occur and for which you'd like my attendance or participation. I am always interested in your opinions and questions and look forward to seeing many of you soon!

**Maximizing
communication
options to let
me know what
you think**

The year 2004 promises to be just as challenging as 2003. I've set up many different ways to reach me. Many of our best ideas come from our constituents. So if you have questions or ideas about issues addressed in this newsletter or by the Legislature in general, I'd like to hear from you. Feel free to contact me directly via e-mail at condotta_ca@leg.wa.gov or visit the new House Republican Caucus Web site and my member page: <http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/condotta.htm>. Also, catch my weekly radio broadcasts. This represents another way for you to communicate with me directly, along with other opportunities including our local office, phone and regular mail. Taken together, all these options are intended to maximize two-way communication between us.



Rep. Cary Condotta and his legislative assistant respond to constituent mail in the Wenatchee District office.

**2003 Legislature
Accomplishments**

**Representative
Cary Condotta**
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